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## South Bank November 1970

STRIJKKWARTET. Sculpture of the Hungarian Quartet by Ubbo Scheffer acquired by the Committee of the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, where it now stands.

# THE HUNGARIAN STRING QUARTET

ZOLTÁN SZÉKELY violin  DENES KOROMZAY viola
MICHAEL KUTTNER violin  GABRIEL MAGYAR cello

# BEETHOVEN
## The Complete Cycle of String Quartets

# BEETHOVEN 1770-1827
# The Complete Cycle of String Quartets

## QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL
General Manager John Denison CBE

### Thursday 19 November 1970 at 7.45 pm
Quartet in F major, Op 18 No 1
Quartet in E flat major, Op 127
Quartet in C major, Op 59 No 3 'Razumovsky'

### Sunday 22 November 1970 at 7.15 pm
Quartet in G major, Op 18 No 2
Quartet in B flat major, Op 130
Quartet in F minor, Op 95

### Tuesday 24 November 1970 at 7.45 pm
Quartet in A major, Op 18 No 5
Quartet in C minor, Op 18 No 4
Quartet in C sharp minor, Op 131

### Thursday 26 November 1970 at 7.45 pm
Quartet in D major, Op 18 No 3
Quartet in E flat major, Op 74 'The Harp'
Quartet in A minor, Op 132

### Saturday 28 November 1970 at 7.45 pm
Quartet in B flat major, Op 130 with Grosse Fuge in B flat major, Op 133
Quartet in F major, Op 59 No 1 'Razumovsky'

## ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
General Manager John Denison CBE

### Monday 30 November 1970 at 8 pm
Quartet in B flat major, Op 18 No 6
Quartet in E minor, Op 59 No 2 'Razumovsky'
Quartet in F major, Op 135

Programme for 26th, 28th and 30th November. Price two shillings & sixpence

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# THE HUNGARIAN STRING QUARTET

## ZOLTÁN SZÉKELY violin

Zoltán Székely was born in a small Hungarian town where his father was a physician. He began violin lessons at the age of five with the local music teacher. After a year the family moved to Budapest where Székely became a pupil of the great Hungarian master, Jeno Hubay, at the world-famous Royal Academy of Music. At the age of 13 he studied composition with the renowned Zoltán Kodály.

Székely received his master's diploma in violin at 18 and immediately won acclaim in all capitals of Europe as a soloist. While a student Székely came into close contact with Belá Bartók. Bartók recognised in him a sympathetic interpreter of his music and the two gave many sonata recitals together. Bartók's 2nd Violin Concerto was dedicated to Székely who gave the world première of the work in 1939.

Székely's compositions include a string quartet, a solo violin sonata, and a transcription of Bartók's 'Rumanian Dances for Violin'. For a number of years Székely was professor of violin at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. After joining the Hungarian Quartet, he gradually gave up his solo activities in order to concentrate fully on chamber music.

Székely plays a Stradivarius, made in 1718, and called the 'Michelangelo'.

## MICHAEL KUTTNER violin

Michael Kuttner was born in Budapest. His parents were ardent lovers of the arts, especially music. Mr Kuttner, Sen. was a friend of Gabriel Magyar's father before World War I, neither dreaming that one day their sons would be colleagues.

At the age of 17, Kuttner graduated from the Academy of Music in Budapest where he had studied in the Hubay violin class and won the coveted Remenyi Prize. He devoted his last year there almost exclusively to chamber music under Leo Weiner, who has been a friend and teacher to every member of the Hungarian Quartet.

Kuttner organised his own quartet in 1935 and soon this ensemble was invited to join the faculty of the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, where they were known as the Westminster Quartet. Later Kuttner played with such famous ensembles as the Roth, the Gordon and the Léner Quartets. This vast experience, together with his lifelong friendship with the other members, made him a natural choice for the Hungarian Quartet.

Kuttner is the owner of a Petrus Guarnerius de Montova violin, made in 1704, and called the 'Santa Theresa'.

## DENES KOROMZAY viola

Denes Koromzay was born in Budapest. His father was president of a railroad company. Koromzay began piano lessons at the age of five, but upon discovery of his gift of absolute pitch his teacher persuaded him to study the violin. At the age of 12 Koromzay entered the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest. His violin teacher was also Jeno Hubay. He won his master's diploma at the age of 17, and then studied composition with Albert Siklos, receiving his degree in composition, as well as in conducting. That same year he participated in the International Concours for Violin in Vienna, winning an honour diploma. The following year he studied in the master class of Carl Flesch at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. Soon Koromzay was heard in many recitals and in broadcasts in Budapest, Vienna and Berlin.

When the Hungarian Quartet was formed in 1935 Koromzay took up the viola for which he had always had a special affection. During the war, when the Hungarian Quartet was immobilised in Holland, he accepted the first viola chair in the famous Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Koromzay plays an exceptionally fine Italian viola, made by Michele Decanet in 1766.

## GABRIEL MAGYAR cello

Gabriel Magyar considers himself a guardian of the same great Hungarian string-playing and chamber music tradition which also formed his colleagues. He was introduced to music at an early age: his mother was a pianist and his father, a professor of humanities and classical languages, was a fervent music enthusiast. Magyar began his studies with the violin but soon found his true instrument - the cello. At the Royal Hungarian Conservatory of Music he was the pupil of Leo Weiner, Anton Friss and Zoltán Kodály and received his master's degree in 1936.

Among the highlights of Magyar's career as a leading young virtuoso were performances of the difficult Kodály Solo Sonata and Milhaud's Cello Concerto.

Magyar's career, like those of many young artists, was temporarily interrupted by the war. Later successful concerts in Europe were followed by engagements in South America and the United States. As solo cellist and member of the trio of the National Radio of Caracas, Venezuela, he gave weekly recitals. Before joining the Hungarian Quartet he was professor of cello and chamber music at the University of Oklahoma.

Magyar's instrument is a Giovanni Baptista Gabrielli cello, built in Florence in 1751.

# BEETHOVEN The String Quartets

Programme Notes by Robin Golding

Beethoven's string quartets fall conveniently into three groups that correspond with the three 'periods' into which his works are commonly divided. The first group comprises six quartets composed between 1798 and 1800 (when Beethoven was already thirty, and when Haydn's fifty-year span of quartet writing was drawing to its close), and published as Op 18 during the year 1801, in two instalments: Nos 1-3 in June, and Nos 4-6 in October. They were dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz, one of Beethoven's staunchest patrons.

In the second group there are five works: the three composed in 1806 for Count Razumovsky, Russian Ambassador in Vienna, who commissioned him to write 'some quartets with Russian melodies, real or imitated'. The Count was himself a keen amateur quartet player (he first went to Vienna in 1792, and had often played second violin in performances of Haydn's quartets); in 1808 he founded the Razumovsky Quartet, whose members included Schuppanzigh, Weiss and Linke, who were later to be closely associated with Schubert. All three works were completed by the autumn of 1806 and were offered to the publishers Breitkopf & Hartel (but not accepted) in November. They were performed soon afterwards - a Viennese critic described them as 'very long and difficult ... deep in thought ... but not generally comprehensible' - but not published until 1808. A year later they were followed by the Quartet in E flat, Op 74 (published in 1810, also with a dedication to Prince Lobkowitz). The last work in the group, Op 95 in F minor, was completed in 1810, first performed (by the Schuppanzigh Quartet) in May 1814, and not published until September 1816, when it was dedicated to Beethoven's old friend Zmeskall von Domanowecz.

The third and greatest group also comprises five quartets (six if we count the 'Grosse Fuge', Op 133, originally intended as the finale of Op 130): Op 127 in E flat (1822-5, published in 1826), Op 130 in B flat (1825-6, published in 1827), Op 131 in C sharp minor (1825-6, published in 1827), Op 132 in A minor (1824-5, published in 1827), and Op 135 in F (1826, published in 1827). Opp 127, 130 and 132 were composed in response to a commission for 'one, two or three new quartets' that Beethoven received in November 1822 from Prince Galitzin, but there is in fact a closer musical bond between Opp 130, 131 and 132, all of which share a common thematic 'motto' of four notes - the top four of the harmonic minor scale, in which there is an interval of an augmented second between the two pairs of notes.

# Thursday 26 November

## Quartet in D, Op 18 No 3

1 Allegro

2 Andante con moto

3 Allegro

4 Presto

It seems fairly certain that the six Op 18 quartets were not composed in the order in which they were published. Nottebohm suggested that, chronologically, the first four were Nos 3, 1, 2 and 5, but was uncertain about the placing of Nos 4 and 6. A feature common to all of the D major Quartet's movements except the scherzo is that they are in sonata form and that their respective first subjects have two clearly differentiated themes (in the second and fourth movements the second subjects, too, are dual). In the first movement it is the two first-subject tunes that are the most important: the first is a flowing theme in even quavers and the second a sprightly tune that is introduced by the first violin, lightly accompanied by the other instruments. The development does not in fact develop much, but amplifies and discusses both these themes to the complete exclusion of the second subject, a measured theme with a number of cross-accents. The subsidiary theme of the first group is not heard at all after the recapitulation, as though to make up for the attention lavished upon it in the earlier part of the movement.

The Andante (in B flat) begins, after four introductory bars, with a shapely tune that is fully accompanied, and continues with a more ornate one, lightly scored and with runs and flourishes on the two violins. The second subject has a light, staccato principal theme and a more impassioned continuation. The most striking part of the movement is the development, which is based on elements of both first-subject themes but is placed between the recapitulation of the first and second subjects, with the result that the movement resembles a slow rondo in design. The D major scherzo (not so named in the score) also has its share of cross-accents, and encloses a trio in the tonic minor, in which running figures on the violins are supported by descending sequences on the lower instruments. The finale is a gay movement in 6:8 metre. Its first two themes are similar in character; its third, with its humorous skips and chromaticisms, well contrasted. The fourth theme is almost too short to be called a tune at all, but its sudden coincidence with an upward shift from E to F major commands attention. The development is concerned with the two principal themes of the first and second subjects - an imitative discussion of the first concluded by a reappearance of the second in the gruff lower register of the cello.

## Quartet in E flat, Op 74 ('Harp')

1 Poco adagio - Allegro

2 Adagio, ma non troppo

3 Presto

4 Allegretto con variazioni

The Quartet in E flat, Op 74 was composed during the summer and autumn of 1809 (when Beethoven was putting the finishing touches to the 'Emperor' piano Concerto), and performed for the first time later the same year at the house of its dedicatee, Prince Lobkowitz. The work already shows a reaction from the brilliant, almost symphonic style of the three 'Razumovsky' Quartets, Op 59: the idiom points rather in the direction of the intimate, personal manner of the last quartets. Its first movement opens with an expressive Adagio introduction that leads into an Allegro whose complex first subject is to provide the bulk of the movement's material. There is a brief appearance of the pizzicato motif (derived from the first bar of the Allegro), which is responsible for the nickname 'Harp' that is often applied to the quartet, before the second subject group, with its prominent semiquaver runs, is reached. The development is built entirely on the first subject, notably its second half, while the long and impressive coda, which almost assumes the function of a second development, makes a feature of the pizzicato motif with an added semiquaver figuration on the first violin that is obviously suggestive of the harp.

The Adagio in A flat is in the form of a slow rondo, with an exquisite cantabile melody as its basis, and with two important episodes in minor keys

and a coda, the main theme being varied and embellished at each reappearance. This is followed by an intensely vital C minor Scherzo pervaded by Beethoven's 'fate' motif, and a C major Trio marked quasi prestissimo and 'to be played as though in 6:8 time' - in other words, with the beat falling on every second bar. Both Scherzo and Trio are recapitulated. The last movement follows without a break: it is a theme (in the customary two repeated halves), with six variations, all of them in the tonic, and none deviating from the theme enough to arouse special comment. The movement is rounded off with a coda.

INTERVAL

(A warning gong will be sounded for five minutes before the end of the interval)

## Quartet in A minor, Op 132

1 Assai sostenuto - Allegro

2 Allegro ma non tanto

3 Molto adagio - Andante

4 Alla marcia, assai vivace

5 Allegro appassionato

Op 132 in A minor, the last of the three 'Galitzin' quartets and also of the great trilogy whose thematic interrelationship has been referred to above, was played for the first time on 6th November 1825 by the Schuppanzigh Quartet, but not published until September 1827, some six months after Beethoven's death. It has earlier roots as well, at least as far as the finale is concerned, for this was originally planned as the last movement of the ninth Symphony, but it stems more immediately from the composer's serious illness during the winter of 1824-5, and was in fact completed soon after his recovery at Baden during the following summer. The slow movement, which is the core of the work, refers directly to this recovery.

The four-note 'motto', in one of its various forms - G sharp, A, F, E- opens the quartet, and it will quickly be recognised both as a version of the first subject of the 'Grosse Fuge' and of the first and last movements of Op 131. Here it pervades the whole of the first movement, for the plaintive, meandering theme that appears in the third bar of the Allegro section in effect pivots on it. Though Vincent d'Indy chose (in 'Cobbett') to analyse the movement as consisting of 'three separate expositions interrupted by developments of the introductory theme', it falls in (making due allowance for Beethoven's expected liberties) with the accepted plan of sonata form, having a second subject (a serene tune in F major) a development (which combines the 'motto' with the 'first' subject), a recapitulation and an extended coda (which surveys the thematic material of the whole movement). The next movement (in A major) is, in effect, a scherzo, though not so named. Thematically, it is a close relation of the foregoing movement, with an upward-bearing figure answered by a gently drooping one. The main tune of the trio section, which amusingly imitates the sound of a 'drone' instrument such as a hurdy-gurdy or bagpipes, is said to have been used by Beethoven many years earlier as a country dance tune. The happy mood of the trio is interrupted suddenly by a reminder of the 'motto', but the bagpipe tune is resumed, and leads to a repeat of the scherzo itself.

Beethoven entitled the slow movement (in French) 'A song of thanksgiving, in the Lydian mode, offered to the Divinity by a convalescent'. It is known that he made a close study of liturgical music, and of Palestrina in particular, while he was working on the 'Missa Solemnis' (1818-23), and it is to this study that the idea of using a chorale melody in the 'fifth tone' (the key of F with B natural instead of B flat) undoubtedly owes its origin. The movement, which is one of Beethoven's longest and most intense, has two main constituents: the chorale (which has five 'lines') and a more vigorous section (Andante) in D major, entitled 'Feeling new strength'. The first appears three times in all, and the second twice, each reappearance being varied and elaborated. Thus the formal scheme is simply ABABA. A brief march movement follows, and acts as an introduction to the finale. The fact that this is achieved by way of a recitative-like passage is not without significance, when we remember that the finale was originally intended as an instrumental last movement to the ninth Symphony. The finale itself, again in A minor, has an impassioned, waltz-like theme and is a rondo with two episodes, the second of them developing a variant of the refrain, and its inversion. There is a coda in the course of which the pace quickens to Presto and the key changes to A major.

# Saturday 28 November

## Quartet in B flat, Op 130

1 Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro

2 Presto

3 Andante con moto, ma non troppo (poco scherzoso)

4 Alla danza tedesca. Allegro

5 Cavatina. Adagio molto

6 Fuga

As we can see from the list of Beethoven's last five quartets, Op 130 in B flat was the second of the three 'Galitzin' quartets in order of publication, but was actually written after Op 132 in A minor and was therefore the last in order of composition. It was composed in its original form between August and November 1825, and performed for the first time on 21st March 1826 by the Schuppanzigh Quartet. But the audience complained that the fugal finale was disproportionately long, and Beethoven - with surprising meekness - allowed himself to be persuaded to replace it with a movement of more normal proportions. The new finale was written between September and November 1826, but Beethoven never witnessed the first performance of the quartet in its final form since this did not take place until 22nd April 1827, four weeks after his death. The quartet and the 'Grosse Fuge' (as Op 133) were both published in May that year. Nowadays the quartet is nearly always played with its substitute finale, but this evening we have one of the rare opportunities to hear it as Beethoven originally planned it, with the gigantic fugue as its sixth and last movement.

The first movement is one of the most complex (and the most moving) in all Beethoven's seventeen quartets. The slow introduction is intimately involved with the main Allegro movement, since its music reappears after the first tentative statement of the first subject (in running semiquavers), before the development, and in the coda. It will be noticed that both the theme of the introduction and the second subject are derived from the 'motto', though with the four notes rearranged so as to incorporate an ascending sixth. The second movement, a lightning scherzo in B flat minor, with a 'trio' in the tonic major (and linked to the reprise of the scherzo by some of the most staggering 'second-time' bars ever written), is followed by a tender Andante in D flat in sonata form without development, in which we may again trace the influence of the 'motto' theme. Next follows an Allegro assai in G major, 'in the style of a German dance' and full of the most telling dynamic contrasts. The fifth movement (in E flat) is ostensibly in the style of cavatina, but it plumbs infinitely deeper depths than any operatic air that aspired to the same title, despite its straightforward ternary form and its simple melodic outline; Beethoven said of it 'Never have I written a melody that affected me so much'. The fugue falls into three main sections, framed by an introductory 'Overtura' twenty-nine bars long, in which the theme is stated once and then in three different versions, and a longish coda. The first of the three main sections of the work is an angular double fugue based on a subject in dotted rhythm and with wide leaps, with the third version of the basic theme as its counter-subject; the second section is slow, with its main subject in semiquavers and with the second version of the basic theme as its counter-subject; the third section is scherzo-like in character (the rhythm is 6:8), with the first version of the basic theme as its principal subject, but - later on - with allusions to the music of both preceding sections of the fugue.

INTERVAL

(A warning gong will be sounded for five minutes before the end of the interval)

## Quartet in F, Op 59 No 1

1 Allegro

2 Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando

3 Adagio molto e mesto

4 Allegro

The first of the three quartets composed for Count Razumovsky is inscribed 'Begun 26th May 1806'. Although it may not seem so at first hearing, its first movement is in fact remarkably economical in design, most of the material being traceable to the swinging cello theme with which it begins. Nearly all the subsidiary ideas heard during the exposition - including the chordal passage immediately following the first fortissimo cadence, and the broken-chord figures preceding the second subject - are derived from it; indeed the only motif that may be said to be independent (the short, lyrical second subject) plays only a minor role in the course of the movement. The huge development section, which opens deceptively with the cello tune again in what looks like being a formal repeat of the exposition, falls into four sections: first a discussion of the main theme which ends with a vigorous unison and the mysterious chords from the end of the exposition; secondly a series of quaver runs for the first violin based on the theme's third bar; thirdly a quasi-fugal discussion of another quaver motif, with a counter-subject in minims; and lastly the combination of the theme's first bar with a triplet motif first heard towards the end of the exposition. In the recapitulation the order of events undergoes some modification, and there is an extended coda.

The 'scherzo' (in B flat) is unusually complex in structure, and is remarkable for its sudden changes of mood - playful one moment, tender the next. Like all the other movements in the quartet it is in sonata form. The first subject group comprises three important motifs: a tapping rhythmic figure, a staccato theme in semiquavers, and a legato one in quavers. The second subject group has two, both in F minor and contrasted in outline, and both played in quick succession by the first violin. The development is based on the first-subject motifs, especially the staccato tune and the rhythmic figure, which now takes on a melodic shape instead of being confined to a monotone. The recapitulation is regular but for the omission of the staccato theme; there is a coda dominated by the two minor-mode themes.

Structurally, the two remaining movements are a good deal simpler. By his sketches for the wonderful F minor Adagio Beethoven wrote: 'A weeping willow or acacia tree on my brother's grave', though what he could have meant by this (if in fact he wrote it in 1806) is a mystery; he could scarcely have been referring to the death of an infant brother who was born and died in 1769, a year before his own birth. There are two themes, the first played at the beginning by the first violin and then taken up by the cello in its high register; the second announced by the same instruments in the reverse order, against a shimmering accompaniment. Both are used in the development, in which the ornamental character of the string writing recalls the slow movements of Mozart's late quintets.

Cadenza-like runs lead into the finale, whose main theme is a Russian folktune entitled 'Ah! my luck, such luck', which tells the story of a noble lady meeting her son after a long absence, who answers her question as to why he is prematurely aged by saying: 'It is not my wife or my children who have aged me, but the harsh service of my king'. Beethoven changed this sad tune (marked by Rimsky-Korsakov in his 'A Hundred Russian Folk-Songs', Op 24, as Andante) into a lively dance - though he gave it something of its original character in a dozen Adagio bars at the very end of the coda. The development section of this brilliant movement is concerned with fragments of the Russian tune and with an energetic, fanfare-like figure introduced at the end of the exposition.

# Monday 30 November

## Quartet in B flat, Op 18 No 6

1 Allegro con brio

2 Adagio, ma non troppo

3 Scherzo. Allegro

4 Adagio (La Malinconia) - Allegretto quasi allegro

Despite Riemann's belief that the fourth of the six Op 18 quartets (the one in C minor) may have originated in Bonn before 1792, there are good reasons for supposing that No 6 in B flat was in fact the first of the set to be written, for musically, despite its undoubted merits, the quartet is on the whole less striking than any of its companions: indeed the only movement which affords a glimpse of the Beethoven of the later quartets is the remarkable slow introduction to the finale.

The opening theme of the first movement, merely a broken chord with a prominent little gruppetto, over a chattering accompaniment, still belongs to the eighteenth century, though the second, with its distinctive rhythm, is considerably more original. The development, which has two skilfully placed pauses, makes use of the first subject and the scale-passages of the transition. The Adagio, a movement of great delicacy and grace, is in ternary form. The main section is in E flat, the middle one (beginning with a two-bar unison) in B flat minor. The return of the first theme is accompanied with much ornamentation on the first violin.

The rhythm of the Scherzo is something of an enigma, 6:8 time being constantly at loggerheads with the 3:4 metre that Beethoven specifies in the score; by contrast the Trio, a chirping violin solo, is disarmingly straightforward. A sombre Adagio entitled 'Melancholy', and bearing the superscription 'this piece must be played with the utmost delicacy', strikes a surprisingly serious note. It leads into a gay, attractive rondo in 3:8, but reappears (briefly) at the end of the rondo's second episode, just when we expect the main theme to return. A short Prestissimo coda rounds the movement off.

## Quartet in E minor, Op 59 No 2

1 Allegro

2 Molto adagio

3 Allegretto

4 Presto

The opening of the E minor Quartet, the second of the three that Beethoven wrote for Count Razumovsky, although at first it may appear to contain a profusion of thematic ideas, is in fact remarkable for its economy. The first subject group derives from the interval of a fifth, as stated in the opening gesture of two short chords; the cadential phrase that answers it twice (the second time rising, characteristically, by a semitone, to F major) is, in essence, no more than an elaboration of this interval, as is the ensuing piece of dialogue between all four instruments, which is played through twice, with a different instrumental layout each time. There is, moreover, a definite rhythmic similarity between the first violin's motif here (bar 13) and the opening of the second subject (cello answered by first violin). Other significant features which, together with the various elements of the first subject, play an important part in the development, are the fierce arpeggios of the transitional passage and the syncopated chords of the last part of the exposition. Both the development and the considerably varied recapitulation which follows are marked with an optional repeat sign - a rare feature in a work of this relatively late date.

No less fine is the E major slow movement, which Beethoven said 'should be played with much feeling'. According to Czerny, he composed it while gazing up at a starry sky at Baden (near Vienna) and 'musing on the harmony of the spheres'. A romantic story, perhaps, and yet a perfectly credible one. The movement is in full sonata form, with a broad, serene main theme above which, once it has been stated in full, the violin plays a free counterpoint. The same mood persists throughout the transitional passage (begun by a rocking figure on the first violin). The second subject group is made up of a variety of different motifs, the last of which (a duet between first and second violins, above a pulsating bass) forms the basis of a

surprisingly impassioned development section. The recapitulation is accompanied by much alteration and variation, and there is a coda on the same lines as the development.

The following Allegretto, hardly a scherzo in the true sense, has a halting, almost lopsided gait, with persistent syncopations that make its rhythm sound more like 6:8 than 3:4. Its Trio (Maggiore) introduces the requested Russian folk tune - which Beethoven marked 'Thème Russe' on its first four entries, as though determined that it should not go unnoticed. He took it from a collection made by Ivan Pratsch, and it was subsequently used on several occasions by Rimsky-Korsakov, and by Mussorgsky in 'Boris Godunov'. Here it is used as the theme of a brisk fugato. Beethoven prescribed that the Allegretto itself should be played through three times and the trio twice, but this lengthy procedure is not always observed in modern performances. The finale is a vigorous sonata rondo with an energetic main theme that disguises its E minor tonality with a strong bias towards C major, and with a pounding rhythm in the accompaniment. The second subject is a sinuous melody in B minor, and it makes an unexpected reappearance at the end of the principal episode (a powerful contrapuntal development of the 'C major' theme) and before the recapitulation. The movement ends with a short coda marked 'più presto'.

INTERVAL

(A warning gong will be sounded for five minutes before the end of the interval)

## Quartet in F, Op 135.

1 Allegretto

2 Vivace

3 Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo

4 Grave ma non troppo tratto - Allegro

The Quartet in F, Op 135, the last that Beethoven wrote, occupies an isolated position among the five colossal works for the medium that he composed during the last six or seven years of his life, since it belongs neither to the group of three (Opp 127, 130 and 132) that he wrote as a result of a request from Prince Galitzin, nor to the musically more homogeneous trilogy sharing a common thematic basis (Opp 130 - together with its original finale, the 'Grosse Fuge', Op 133 - 131 and 132). Op 135 was composed during the latter part of 1826, and performed for the first time at a memorial concert organised by the cellist Josef Linke on 23rd March 1828 - almost exactly a year after Beethoven's death - in the Musikvereinsaal in Vienna. It was published in September 1827 with a dedication to Johann Nepomuk Wolfmayer, a cloth-merchant by trade but an ardent amateur musician and one of Beethoven's staunchest friends during the composer's last years; Wolfmayer was originally intended as the dedicatee of the C sharp minor Quartet, Op 131, but Beethoven was anxious to make amends to him, and appears to have done so at the instigation of Carl Holz, who told him that the dedication of Op 135 to him 'would be the happiest event in his life'.

The F major Quartet is the shortest of the last five, and its general character is somewhat lighter than that of its four companions. The first of its four movements (one of which, possibly the second, may have been added as a 'makeweight' after the completion of the remainder) makes use of a variety of short thematic ideas, the most important of which are the interrogatory phrases of the first four bars, the lilting first subject into which they lead, and the running semiquavers and triplets which are associated with the first of the two main subsidiary themes. The development is mainly concerned with the 'first' subject and the passage of falling intervals (sevenths and seconds) which immediately follows it. The second movement is a fast scherzo with jarring suspensions, and with an extended trio section characterised by its rhythmic impetus and the wide skips of its exuberant first violin part. This is followed by a miraculously beautiful Lento cast in D flat major, with a short middle section in D flat minor (written, for convenience, in C sharp minor). In the reprise of the first section the music is considerably elaborated. The finale bears the heading 'Der schwer gefasste Entschluss' ('The difficult decision'), and begins with a dramatic Grave in F minor that asks the question 'Must it be?', to which the first notes of the main body of the movement (Allegro, F major) give the answer 'It must be!' We can interpret this struggle in whatever way we like, but it is worth observing that in his sketches for the quartet Beethoven had jotted the theme down in jest as an accompaniment to his housekeeper's demand for money. The music of this threatening introduction returns to interrupt the gaiety of the finale once more before the quartet pursues its way to its serene, untroubled conclusion.

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During a recent test in the Hall, a note played 'Mezzoforte' on the horn measured approximately 65 decibels [dB(A)] of sound. A single 'uncovered' cough gave the same reading. A handkerchief placed over the mouth when coughing assists in obtaining a 'pianissimo'.

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SOUTH BANK—NOVEMBER 1970

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# HUNGARIAN QUARTET

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Michael Kuttner, *violin*
Denes Koromzay, *viola*
Gabriel Magyar, *cello*

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## ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

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# HUNGARIAN STRING QUARTET

# BEETHOVEN

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**Thursday, 19th November 1970 at 7.45 p.m.**
Quartet in F major, Op. 18 No. 1
Quartet in E flat major, Op. 127
Quartet in C major, Op. 59 No. 3 "Rasoumowsky"

**Sunday, 22nd November 1970 at 7.15 p.m.**
Quartet in G major, Op. 18 No. 2
Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130
Quartet in F minor, Op. 95

**Tuesday, 24th November 1970 at 7.45 p.m.**
Quartet in A major, Op. 18 No. 5
Quartet in C minor, Op. 18 No. 4
Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131

**Thursday, 26th November 1970 at 7.45 p.m.**
Quartet in D major, Op. 18 No. 3
Quartet in E flat major, Op. 74 "The Harp"
Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

**Saturday, 28th November 1970 at 7.45 p.m.**
Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130 with Grosse Fuge in B flat major, Op. 133
Quartet in F major, Op. 59 No. 1 "Rasoumowsky"

## ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

**Monday, 30th November 1970 at 8 p.m.**
Quartet in B flat major, Op. 18 No. 6
Quartet in E minor, Op. 59 No. 2 "Rasoumowsky"
Quartet in F major, Op. 135

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